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# Montana Democratic Convention

Max S. Baucus

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Senator \* or Department\*: **BAUCUS**

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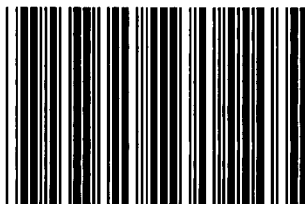
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BAUCUS

**Mary Caferro**

Mary, thanks for that great introduction. I don't know if you folks know, but Mary is one of the hardest working folks in Montana politics. If there is someone who needs help, maybe a little down on their luck, Mary is right there to help them get back on their feet.

## **Chairman McDonald**

When you think of Democratic strongholds across our state, Sweet Grass County isn't usually at the top of the list, I know from experience. But Sweet Grass County is home to Melville, where our fearless Chairman calls home. I can't think of any better example of salt-of-the-earth Montana folks than Dennis McDonald. Dennis has fought for Montanans from Alzada to Yak, he is just aces. Let's give him a hand.

Isn't it great to be a Democrat?! I can't hear  
you. Isn't it great to be Montana  
Democrat?!!

I'm proud to be a Democrat. You know  
why?

- Because Democrats care about  
people more than politics.
- Because Democrats don't fire U.S.  
Attorneys out of political spite.

- Because Democrats wouldn't have pardoned Scooter Libby.
- Democrats won't support a war without end in Iraq.
- Democrats hold deep faith -- without zealotry.
- Democrats won't sell off our public lands, or drill in places like the Rocky Mountain Front.

- Democrats won't side with insurance companies over our kids.

The great football coach Vince Lombardi once said: "The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand."

Applying the best of ourselves is what it's going to take to make Montana an even better place for our kids and grandkids.

Applying the best of ourselves is what it's going to take to build on the success we've seen in Montana in recent years. Are you ready to get to work? Me too.

Before we talk about the future, we have to look to the past.

### **Success in Montana**

Montana Democrats have been on the move in recent years. We've made some big, solid gains.



Just think about it.

Since 2002:

- We reclaimed the Governor's Mansion and sent a farmer named Brian Schweitzer to Helena.
- We took back control of the Montana Legislature.
- We invested in education, health care, small businesses.

- We toppled the Conrad Burns regime, reclaimed Mike Mansfield's seat, and sent a farmer named Jon Tester to the U.S. Senate.

That's something we can all be proud of.

And that's because of the hard work by the people in this room.

Our success wasn't easy. It was a long, hard road. But we stuck to our guns.

Never gave up on our principles or bedrock Montana values. Values of faith, community, hard work. Common sense.

And we prevailed because we are right.

But we also saw how the dynamics of the Legislature can hinge on a single vote. That makes our work so much more important next time.

Now we are entering another election cycle.

And friends I can tell you this is going to be another hard, bumpy road.

## **2008**

In 2008, we are going to have to work hard to defend the gains we've made. Our great Governor and my friend Brian Schweitzer is up for reelection. Are you going to help him win again? I can't hear you. Are you going to help Brian?

And as you know, my job contract is up every 6 years. I'm the hired hand. I work for you. And I want to thank you — all of you — for your friendship and support over the years. If it weren't for all of your hard work, I wouldn't be here today. It's that simple.

And I want you to know how much your friendship has meant to me. Thank you for all you have done and all you continue to do.

Can I count on your help in 2008, too? Can I count on you!?!

Good. Because we're a team. All of us.

Brian, Jon, the legislative leadership in Helena, all of you. We're all good friends, united in a common goal. And that's doing what's right for Montana.

You can count on me to help in every way I can. Like I always do, I'll raise money. I'll pound in yard signs.

I'll knock on doors for candidates up and down the ticket. We're in this together.

## **CHIP**

Why do elections matter so much? I'm going to give you one example.

As you know all too well, one of the most pressing issues facing Montanans and Americans right now is the high cost of health care.

Our nation's health-care system is heading toward the ditch, and fast. If we don't do something soon, millions of people will simply have to go without health care. That's not an option. We need to push towards Universal Health Care.

Everywhere that I go — from the café in Miles City to the lumber mill in Western Montana — I hear the same thing. It's health care.



And it's not just in Montana. I hear it all over the country.

We won't fix our nation's health care system overnight. It's just too big of a bite to take at once. But we begin to make progress this year.

And as we begin to tackle this problem there's no better place to start than with our kids. That's why we must renew and expand the Children's Health Insurance Program, so that more kids can get coverage.

As a parent, I know the heartache and worry that goes along with seeing your child sick and hurting.

I was a little late in getting home this weekend because the Senate was debating my bill that would provide \$35 billion for CHIP and cover an additional 3.2 million kids, 12,000 in Montana alone. Though it took some arm twisting, I'm proud to say it passed.

And how are we paying for this new approach to health care? By raising the tax on cigarettes. That's just the right thing to do.

That's how we paid for CHIP in the first place in 1997.

But you know what President Bush did when he learned about my plan? He vowed to veto it. Can you believe it? How could he be against providing health care to poor children? We're siding with America's kids.

Elections really do matter.

Thank you.